

Intercultural Multilingual Education in Latin America

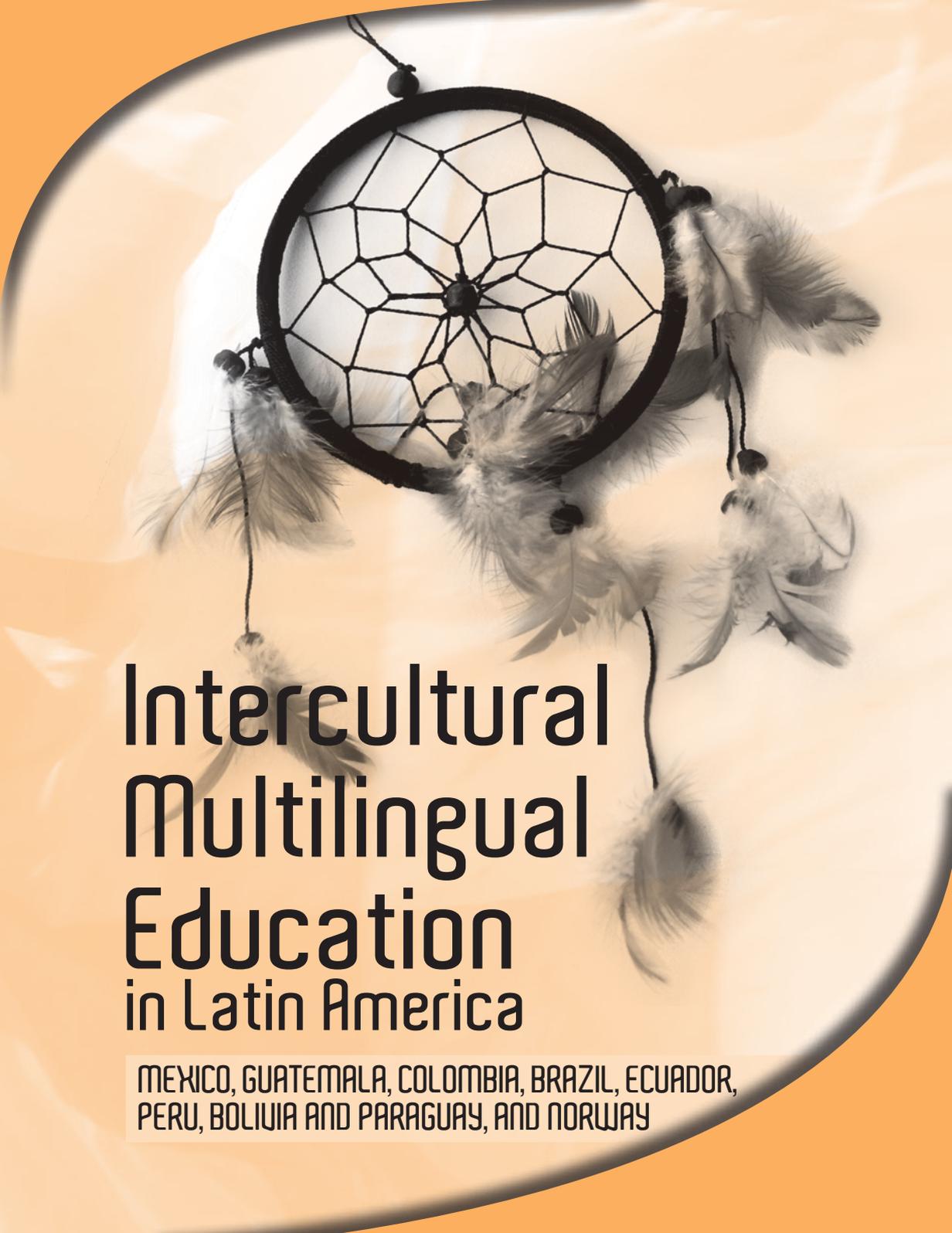
MEXICO, GUATEMALA, COLOMBIA, BRAZIL, ECUADOR,
PERU, BOLIVIA AND PARAGUAY, AND NORWAY



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Internacional de la Educación
Oficina Regional para América Latina



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Presentation

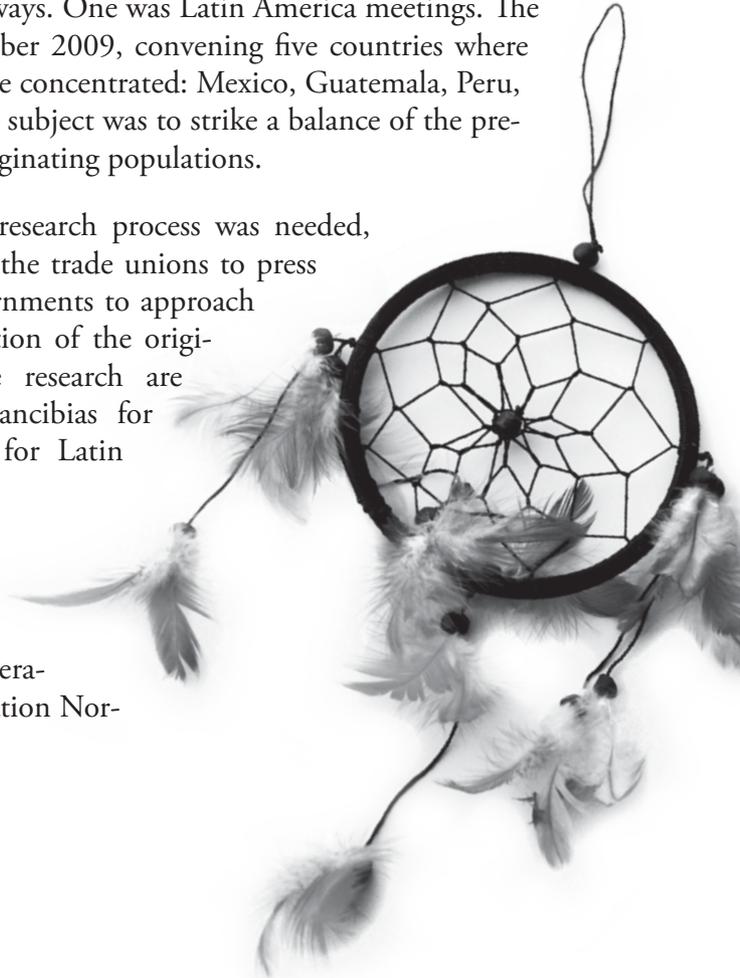
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A Processes need to be developed for deconstructing invisibilization, racism and discrimination. They would have to address issues such as budget allocation, school infrastructure, educational management and structure, the curriculum, textbooks and school materials and teacher training, etc.

Union organizations have an important role to play in that process, that was initiated in two ways. One was Latin America meetings. The first was held last November 2009, convening five countries where indigenous populations are concentrated: Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. The subject was to strike a balance of the prevailing situation of the originating populations.

Secondly, a fact finding research process was needed, leading to a proposal for the trade unions to press with, requiring the governments to approach public policies for education of the originating populations. The research are coordinated by Juan Arancibias for Education Internacional for Latin America.

This document is part of this process initiated by Education Internacional for Latin America in cooperation with Union of Education Norway



1. Introduction

This document deals with intercultural bilingual education (IBE), its current status and the concepts and processes driving it today – and in a certain way the conflicts encompassing it. It contains information on Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay, and includes some data and comments on Norway. Certainly all Latin America is involved in the topic, one way or another, but for now this is the geographical scope of the paper. It seeks to give an overview of the whole and profile a few specific aspects by country.

From an historical perspective, in all the countries what we know today as IBE began in reality as simply bilingual education. The aim was to enable the indigenous populations to become Hispanicized and evangelized, and to gen-

erate a more effective hegemonic dominance. Although these phenomena could be studied separately, full comprehension of them would require an explanation that integrates them.

Bilingual education was and has been conceived as a transition from a dominant, discriminatory and inferiorizing monoculturalism to bilingualism where Spanish and the Western culture predominated. After the political independence of our countries, bilingual education worked – and in some ways has not stopped working – as a process for assimilating indigenous peoples into white-mestizo culture and society, as a way to help them along the path to “development” and leave behind “barbarism” and backwardness, so they would not continue to brake the progress of the entire society.

6 This long historical period can be characterized by the term “internal colonialism”, since the indigenous peoples continued to be exploited, inferiorized, discriminated against and excluded, except for the task of producing wealth for the conquerors’ Creole-mestizo heirs.

We should not confuse ourselves by thinking that Hispanicizing indigenous people meant making them literate. For the nineteenth century and at least the entire first half of the twentieth century most of the peasant population – and among this mostly the indigenous population – was illiterate, and this illiteracy has always referred to Spanish. The dominant landholder community in Latin America was not interested in education for the poor and indigenous; their lack of a full mastery of Spanish and inability to read and write was operative for political control and the backward forms of exploitation in the countryside.

In the midst of this long neocolonial night came stirrings in the twentieth century of proposals and experiences from the indigenous population claiming the right to education and an education of their own, based on their own language,

culture, territory and needs. IBE did not begin in Latin America as an initiative of governments and states, although an exception to this could have been various measures taken by Lázaro Cárdenas’ administration in the 30s, such as the creation of the Department of Indigenous Affairs. But most notably, for having started from the ground up, were the experiences of the Warisata Indigenous School in Bolivia, the Chimborazo in Ecuador and the Puno region in Peru. At any rate, these experiences did not receive support from the states and were even viewed with distrust by the governing oligarchies, which saw education for the indigenous people as a threat to the political and economic system operating to their benefit.

The situation would change in the last thirty-odd years of the twentieth century, as ever more intense demands began to be heard from the indigenous organizations and communities for implementation of an IBE that would push aside assimilationism and homogenization. Up until that time the inclusion of indigenous peoples in the “national” society was taken as “whitening”, and it should be re-

membered that the most effective whitening instrument in the service of mestization has been, undoubtedly, the school, with its homogenizing and disciplinizing model of formal education. Steps began to be taken from the notion of integration as assimilation toward one of critical cultural pluralism.

A bit of interesting background in the process was a meeting in Barbados (in 1971) of several social scientists and a few indigenous leaders, the goal being to find alternative paths to those taken up until then. What happened in Barbados can be considered a dividing of the waters with respect to the approach to indigenous affairs, as quite critical aspects were incorporated into the intellectual and political work, and concepts such as ethnocide, ethno-development and de-colonization were a part of its legacy. Later, the concept of internal colonialism would gain intellectual force and political impact.

In the 80s the process took on more clarity and force; indigenous peoples not only clamored for instituting IBE as a state process, but also demanded control of it. One milestone in that demand was the creation in Ecuador of the

DINEIB, charged with making decisions and administering IBE. What is different about this case is that the DINEIB remained under the control of indigenous organizations, in particular the CONAIE.¹

In the current stage, IBE is the educational modality demanded by the indigenous movement everywhere. It consists of an appropriation of education that vindicates plurilingualism, pluriculturalism, plurinationalism, interculturalism and intraculturalism; an inclusion is demanded that is respectful of diversity and identity and occurs in conditions of equality. Political representation, territoriality and on some occasions autonomy is demanded. The demands for autonomy and territorial control are the ones resisted the most by the dominant white-mestizo community, whose maximum offer extends as far as decentralization.

But the demand for IBE does not stop at the use, conservation and development of languages and cultures; it continues on into the curriculum, pedagogies and epistemologies. It demands interculturalism as a component that cuts across

¹ The current administration of President Correa took that control from it and transferred it to the Ministry of Education.

8 society as a whole, not just for the indigenous, Afro and other populations. It calls for intraculturalism in support of interculturalism.

As the demands advance they extend to topics such as development or the de-legitimization of the concept of development as being historically linked to the destruction of the environment, unbridled consumerism, inequality and exploitation, and situate the topic in “living well/good living”, in the domain of meanings and not only in the economy. It is a viewpoint that has its basis in cosmologies, values and political, cultural and social principles; it rescues indigenous practice and know-how and confronts the hegemonic discourse and neoliberal capitalist economic development practices. Developed even further, the demands presuppose a re-founding of the states and the building of a new civilizing paradigm.

On the other hand, a feeling is spreading of a return to the indigenous, of an historical reinvention of identities and peoples. This return is sustained by centuries of resistance and has caused societies that no longer speak the ancestral language to want to recover it

along with its clothing, rituals and spirituality. They want to become indigenous again and from there fight for their rights against the white-mestizo state and the dominant, discriminatory society it represents. They want to put an end to internal colonialism once and for all.

2. Refounding States

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Intra-, Inter- and Multiculturalism and Multilingualism in Constitutions and the Refounding of the States in Latin America

Most of the countries in Latin America have incorporated IBE into their constitutions and signed Convention 169,¹ but some of these countries are going through a new stage in their cultural and sociopolitical development that takes them forward from a demand for IBE to a re-founding of the State as one with a plurinational, pluricultural and multilingual nature and, in addition, to the building of a new “development” paradigm known as “good living”.

The **Bolivian constitution** points out that this country is a plurinational, intercultural, decentralized state with autonomies (including indigenous ones), and is founded in linguistic and cultural plurality. The official languages are Spanish and all the languages of the originating indigenous peasant peoples and nations. The state assumes and promotes the following as ethical and moral principles of the plural society: ama qhilla, ama llulla, ama suwa (don't be lazy, don't be a liar, and don't be a thief), suma qamaña (living well), ñandereko (life in harmony), teko kavi (good life), ivi maraei (land without evil) and qhapaj ñan (noble life or path).

In Ecuador the constitution establishes the state as intercultural, plurinational and secular. The indigenous nationalities, peoples and

¹ Norway also signed.

10 communities, the Afro-Ecuadorian people, the Montubio people and the communes are part of it, and it is one and indivisible. Spanish is the official language; Quechua and Shuar are official languages only in intercultural relationships. The other ancestral languages are of official use for the indigenous peoples in the areas where they live and under the terms set by law.

In Peru the constitution does *not* expressly recognize the Peruvian state as plurinational. It highlights ethnic and cultural identity as a personal right and not as a right of the originating peoples and speaks of the existence of native and peasant communities. The official languages are Spanish and also – in the areas where they predominate – Quechua, Aymara and the other aboriginal languages. Native and peasant communities have a legal existence and are juridical persons.²

In Guatemala, the 1985 constitution states that the nation is formed by different ethnic groups, including indigenous ones of Mayan lineage. The state recognizes,

respects and promotes their ways of living, customs, traditions, forms of social organization, the use of indigenous dress by men and women, languages and dialects. It posits that indigenous community lands will enjoy the state's special protection and different types of assistance for guaranteeing their protection and development and for maintaining their own forms of management. The state is committed to providing state lands to indigenous communities that need them for their development.

In Paraguay the 1992 constitution defines it as a pluricultural and bilingual country. Spanish and Guaraní are the official languages. The indigenous languages, as well as those of other minorities, are part of the nation's cultural heritage, but are not official languages (*Guaraní is not defined as an indigenous language*). The indigenous peoples are recognized and defined as cultural groups previous to the formation and organization of the state. They are recognized, and their right to preserve and develop their ethnic identity in their respective habitats is guaranteed.

The removal or transfer of peoples from their habitat without their express consent is prohibited.

² They are autonomous in their organization, community work and the use and free disposal of their lands. Ownership of their lands is imprescriptible, except in the case of abandonment.

In Mexico the constitution establishes that the nation has a pluricultural composition grounded in its indigenous peoples.³ The awareness itself of an indigenous identity must be used as a fundamental criterion for determining who the provisions regarding indigenous peoples should be applied to. The communities making up an indigenous people are defined as those that form a cultural, economic and social unit, are settled in a territory and recognize their own authorities in accordance with their uses and customs. Indigenous communities and peoples will be recognized in state constitutions and laws, which must take into account the constitution and ethno-linguistic and physical settlement criteria.

In Colombia, Article 7 of the constitution states that the state recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation, and Article 8 posits that it is the obligation of the state and the people to protect the nation's natural and cultural wealth. It can be concluded that pluriethnicity and pluriculturalism are recognized, but the state

³ These are people who are descended from populations that inhabited the country's current territory at the start of colonization and who preserve their own political, cultural, economic and social institutions, or part of them.

is not assumed to be multinational. The only official language is Spanish, but the constitution specifies that ethnic group languages and dialects are also official in their territories. In addition to being limited as to their official validity, indigenous languages are not conceded official status but are defined as languages and/or dialects, which leaves them conceptually and legally inferior.

In Brazil the federal constitution of 1988 consecrates the territorial, educational and cultural rights and the right to self-representation of the indigenous peoples.⁴ It recognizes multiethnicity and plurilingualism, and gives the state the attribute and obligation of disseminating and protecting the cultural manifestations of indigenous peoples, Afro-Brazilians and other groups participating in the national civilizing process. Ethno-cultural diversity is a general principle in the definition of public policy. The official language is Portuguese. The state is not defined as multinational.

⁴ Art. 231. São reconhecidos aos índios sua organização social, costumes, línguas, crenças e tradições, e os direitos originários sobre as terras que tradicionalmente ocupam, competindo à União demarcá-las, proteger e fazer respeitar todos os seus bens. § 4º - As terras de que trata este artigo são inalienáveis e indisponíveis, e os direitos sobre elas, imprescritíveis.

In Norway, after decades of discrimination, “Norwegianization” and even illegalization of the Sami language, the Sami Parliament, or Sámediggi, was established in 1987 thanks to the organized struggle of the Sami people, with jurisdiction over matters such as the Sami cultural heritage, education, language, business and culture. The Sami people are recognized as an indigenous people by the constitution,⁵ and that recognition also occurs in the EU. These processes are leading to the appreciation of diversity as wealth – not just for the Sami but for the different groups of immigrants making up Norway today.

A key question is what the constitutions and education laws in Bolivia and Ecuador state is the goal of building *good living*.⁶ This concept

5 Norway’s political constitution states that it is the duty of authorities to create conditions for the protection and development of the Sami language, society and culture. The Sami Parliament administers all work areas that have to do with the Sami and is also in charge of submitting to Norwegian official authorities and private institutions any issues that involve the interests of the Sami People.

6 *In good living* material goods are not the only determinants; there are other values at play: knowledge, social and cultural recognition, ethical and even spiritual codes of conduct in the relationship with society and nature, human values, the vision of the future, and others. Good living is a core category in the philosophy of life of indigenous societies; its contribution invites us to assume other “skills” and practices. In

of life is present, with different names, in different indigenous cosmovisions. Generically, it could be said that “good living” or “living well” is life in plenitude, knowing how to live in harmony and balance with the cycles of Mother Earth, the cosmos, life and history, and in balance with every form of existence; it is knowing how to live and coexist. “Living well” is understanding that all forms of existence are important for the balance of all life as a whole.⁷ The idea is to go from human rights and the rights of nature to simply the rights of life. Good living is a substantial contribution of the originating peoples to current society – and this is so because of the environmental and civilizing crisis we are living through today that requires integral solutions.

this conception there is no vision of a linear process establishing a previous or later condition. There is no vision of a condition of underdevelopment to be overcome or a condition of development to be reached. Finally, good living is a philosophy of life that opens the gate to the building of a liberating and tolerant project without prejudices or dogmas – a project that, having accumulated many histories of resistance struggles and proposals of change, is positioned as the starting point for building a society sustainable in all senses. In Alberto Acosta, *“El Buen Vivir, una oportunidad por construir”*

7 Huanacuni Mamani, Fernando: “Vivir Bien/ Buen Vivir”. Edited by the Convenio Andrés Bello, Instituto Internacional de Integración. La Paz, Bolivia, 2010.

3. Education laws

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Intercultural, Bilingual Education in Education Laws and Other Supplementary Laws

Although constitutional recognition of the state's multi or bilingual and pluricultural nature is important and represents a breakthrough with respect to the assimilationist, invisibilizing and homogenizing past, this does not mean that the consequences of this recognition are being assumed in everyday practice. In most cases bilingualism and/or multilingualism are issues only the indigenous peoples have to take on, and the same thing happens with interculturalism, which is conspicuously lacking in societies as a whole.

Education laws have been adapting to the changing constitutions and educational reforms taking place in the last part of the twentieth century and up to now in this century. The scope of the legal changes and changes in the educational systems has depended on the depth of the constitutional, political and social transformations that have been occurring. The transformations are made possible by changes in power relationships, and essential to the gestation of these changes are the struggles of organized originating peoples and their ability to get their demands written into the new institutionality.

The deepest transformations are taking place in **Bolivia and Ecuador**. In **Bolivia** the education law provides that every person has a right to receive free, universal, pro-

14 ductive, integral and intercultural education at all levels, without discrimination, and that *education is intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual throughout the educational system,¹ including the university level.* Based on the potentialization of the knowledge, skills and languages of originating indigenous peasant peoples and nations and Afro-Bolivian and intercultural communities, interrelations and coexistence with equal opportunities for all is encouraged through an appreciation and reciprocal respect between cultures. Interculturalism is valid for all the country's inhabitants and should lead to knowledge of the other cultures and the gradual learning of the originating languages by non-

1 *Intraculturalism* fosters the recovery, strengthening, development and internal cohesion of the cultures of originating indigenous peasant peoples and nations and intercultural and Afro-Bolivian communities for the consolidation of the state, which is defined as *plurinational*. The curriculum incorporates the knowledge and skills of the cosmovisions of the originating indigenous peasant peoples and nations and intercultural and Afro-Bolivian communities. *Interculturalism* refers to the interrelating and interacting of the knowledge, skills, science and technology of each culture with other cultures. *Its plurilingual nature* implies the existence of different languages or tongues that may be present in a national territory or even in a school and/or classroom; thus historical bilingualism is overcome.

indigenous peoples.

In Ecuador the respective law guarantees the right to education in the context of good living, interculturalism and plurinationalism. Stakeholders in the system are guaranteed knowledge, recognition, respect, appreciation, and recreation of the different nationalities, cultures and peoples making up Ecuador and the world, along with their ancestral knowledge, upholding unity in diversity, fostering inter- and intracultural dialog, and tending to an appreciation of the different cultures' forms and uses that are in harmony with human rights.² The law establishes IBE as an important part of the national education system. Development of the general curriculum has to reflect the intercultural and plurinational nature of the state. An important and very controversial aspect is that the new law changes the previous DINEIB (National

2 Western "universal" human rights. It also guarantees the right of individuals to an education that enables them to build and develop their own cultural identity, freedom of choice and identity ascription, providing students space for reflecting on, visibilizing, strengthening and fortifying their culture. The right of all individuals, communes, communities, peoples and nations to be educated in their own language and the official languages for intercultural relations.

Office for Intercultural Bilingual Education) into an IBE under-secretariat³ under the ministry of education. Created in 1988 and placed in charge of IBE, DINEIB was autonomous from the ministry and controlled by indigenous organizations, especially the CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador). Now nationalities (as individuals) and not organizations of nationalities can participate on the *Plurinational Council for the Intercultural Bilingual Education System*,⁴ with one representative for each nationality. Elimination of the DINEIB as an autonomous entity, transfer of IBE to ministerial control and lateral participation, not organized

³ The head of the under-secretariat must be indigenous and speak an ancestral language. One of the tasks of the under-secretariat is to transversalize interculturalism in the system. The law also creates the *Instituto de Idiomas, Ciencias y Saberes Ancestrales de los pueblos y nacionalidades* as an entity under the Ministry of Education, charged with strengthening the educational policies. It must foster the use and development of the ancestral languages, sciences and knowledge of the peoples and nations. Spanish is declared the official language. Spanish, Quechua and Shuar are official languages for intercultural relations. The other languages have no official recognition, although their existence is recognized and they may be used for educating.

⁴ The law does not specify if the Council is consultative or if its proposals and definitions are binding for the educational authority.

by the indigenous peoples, have all been harshly criticized by indigenous organizations and the UNE, who see this as a step backward and a lack of respect for the nationalities.

Unlike Bolivia, where all education takes on an intercultural and plurilingual nature, in Ecuador⁵ IBE is structured as a system within the national education. This is *not* truly consistent with the denomination of the new law as the “Organic Law of Intercultural Education”.

In Peru, the General Education Act of 2003 establishes several principles, such as the one that interculturalism (which serves as a basis for IBE) *assumes the country’s linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity as wealth*. It provides that one of the goals of education *should be* the building of a culture of peace that affirms a national identity grounded in linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity. Article 10 links universalized, equitable, quality education to the adoption of an intercultural approach. Article 19 states that the state recognizes and

⁵ Higher education is also excluded from IBE, arguing the need for respecting its legal autonomy. The constitution states that Spanish is the official language.

16 guarantees the right of indigenous peoples to an education under equal conditions to the rest of the national community. Article 20 provides that IBE must be offered throughout the education system, *something that is not being done.*

In Guatemala the national education law of 1991 states the importance of educating in the originating languages in indigenous areas (following the constitutional definition). In 2002 the Guatemalan nation was declared pluricultural, multilingual and multiethnic,⁶ and although the official language is Spanish, the state must recognize, promote and respect the languages of the Mayan, Garifuna and Xinka peoples. Respect, promotion, development and use of the cited languages must be applied in all public and private education processes, modalities and levels.

Government Decision 22-2004 establishes obligatory bilingualism in national languages as a national linguistic policy for all public and private sector students. The first language to be learned is each person's mother tongue; the second is another national language, and

⁶ Decree 81-2002 of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, Law for the Educational Promotion of Anti-Discrimination.

the third should be a foreign language. It also establishes the obligatory teaching and practice of multiculturalism and interculturalism as public policies for dealing with cultural and ethnic differences for all public and private sector students.

In Paraguay, the general education act of 1998 provides that all of the country's inhabitants have the right to an integral and permanent education which – as a system and process – will be conducted in *the context of the community's culture*. It also states that *indigenous peoples* enjoy the rights recognized for them by the national constitution and this law. Article 9 establishes that the goals of the educational system include training in the mastery of the two official languages and knowledge, preservation and fostering of the national community's spiritual, linguistic and cultural heritage. Article 11 states that education for ethnic groups is understood as one that is offered to groups or communities that have their own culture, language and traditions and are part of the Paraguayan nationality.

The education law has been supplemented by the *Langua-*

ge Act, approved and enacted in January 2011, which furthers the conception, implementation and teaching of the two official languages by creating the Guarani Language Academy and assigning it attributes and tasks.

In Paraguay, bilingualism and interculturalism (which is implicit in it) is a reality that is claiming ever-expanding spaces of existence. Paraguay is the only country on the continent that has active, everyday bilingualism involving more than 85% of the entire population. This intercultural bilingualism has come about as a more or less unconscious process, which since recently is slowly becoming a battle standard for different sectors of the population.⁷ With respect to IBE (only for indigenous peoples), just recently in 2007 the General Office for Indigenous School Education was created by law as part of the ministry. Before this, IBE existed, but there are serious doubts as to the real existence of IBE in the country. What was bad was bilingual education for the mestizo majority. A key question in the case

of Paraguay is *whether it is possible to push a recovery of the entire culture (basically Guarani) from what is properly indigenous (today a minority) onto all the bilingual and/or still monolingual population.*⁸

In Colombia, the constitution itself states that the education provided in communities with their own linguistic traditions will be bilingual. Chapter 3 of the later General National Education Act (115/94) discusses education for ethnic groups and states that education in these groups will be guided by general educational goals and principles, which are based on integration, interculturalism, linguistic diversity, community participation, flexibility and progressiveness.⁹ In national terms it proposes that the study and critical understanding of the national culture and the county's cultural and ethnic diversity is the basis for na-

⁸ According to the information obtained, some 50% of the population that speaks Guarani is still monolingual, and 87% of the country's total population speaks Guarani in spite of the historical abuse and discrimination it has suffered.

⁹ "Its purpose will be to secure the processes of identity, knowledge, socialization, protection and proper use of nature, community organization practices and systems, use of the vernacular tongues, teacher training and research in all areas of the culture."

⁷ Colloquially speaking, the presence can be seen of a sort of Paraguayan Guarani-mestizo and spoken Spanish that has also been penetrated by Guarani.

18 tional unity and identity.

The Native Language Act,¹⁰ passed afterwards on December 9, 2010, leads off with the recognition that the country has 850,000 people¹¹ who belong to indigenous groups and have 64 languages of their own. This law seeks to conserve, preserve and disseminate the native languages. It likewise provides for officializing the native languages when they are used in people's first and last names and when used to name traditions and places in the ethnic groups' territories.

In Brazil,¹² different laws regulate indigenous school education (ISE). Of special relevance is the regularization of the *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais da Educação Escolar Indígena*. The bill was agreed upon in advance by 81 ethnic groups in the country and 82 indigenous town councils and organizations located in 26 departments; more than 1,800 people participated.

11 The 2005 census of the National Department of Statistics (DANE) states that Colombia has 38,985,785 inhabitants, of which some 1,265,376 are indigenous, representing 3.2% of the total population.

12 Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional / LDB, Lei 9.934-1996, que regulamento os direitos constitucionais; o Plano Nacional de Educação, Lei 10.172/2001 com o Capítulo 9, específicos para a ISE com diagnóstico, metas e objetivos; a normatização da *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais da Educação Escolar Indígena* pelo Conselho Nacional de Educação, por meio do Parecer 14/CEB-CNE e a Resolução 03/CEB-CNE de 1999.

rriculares Nacionais da Educação Escolar Indígena made by the National Education Council by means of Opinion 14/CEB-CNE and Resolution 03/CEB-CNE of 1999, since it provides a specific category for indigenous schools with their own legal procedures and standards and special teacher training programs. Moreover, it identifies institutional responsibilities. Decree 6.861/2009 establishes ethno-educational territories, creating the conditions for safeguarding and making the material and nonmaterial assets of indigenous peoples a part of the heritage of Brazilian society. Through the ministry of education the Brazilian state perceives ISE as intercultural, bilingual/multilingual, specific and differentiated pursuant to constitutional provisions. It recognizes each indigenous group's right to its own school education grounded in its own cultural values, with a vision of socio-environmental continuity and development of linguistic and cultural policies, using originating languages in the teaching/learning process and following its own learning processes. This last implies not assuming "Western" learning processes.

In Mexico, Article 7 of the 1993

Education Act establishes that education provided by the state and its decentralized and authorized private institutions will have the following goals, among others: build awareness of nationality and sovereignty... and appreciation of the traditions and cultural idiosyncrasies of the country's different regions; promote knowledge of the nation's linguistic plurality and respect for the linguistic rights of indigenous peoples, who will have access to compulsory education in their own language; and adapt the three levels of basic education to address the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the country's different indigenous groups. *The education act* is plain and simple with respect to IBE, although the history of IBE in independent Mexico is extensive, one of its milestones being the creation of the General Office for Indigenous Education in 1978.¹³

¹³ In brief, the attributes conferred to it are: propose pedagogical standards, contents, plans and study programs, methods, teaching aids and materials and tools for assessing indigenous education learning, making sure they have a bilingual intercultural orientation that ensures an integrated education of the students of the different ethnic groups and that they protect and foster the development of their languages, customs, resources and specific forms of organization. *As can be seen, mestizos are not included.*

The struggle of indigenous peoples, the Zapata uprising in 1994 and later negotiations have given rise to the Mexican Indigenous Act, passed in 2001 (a law rejected by the Zapata movement). This law states that in order to overcome the shortages and backlogs affecting indigenous communities and peoples, the relevant authorities have to, among other obligations: guarantee and increase the levels of schooling, favoring bilingual and intercultural education; establish a scholarship system for indigenous students at all levels; define and develop educational programs with regional content that recognize the cultural inheritance of its peoples, in accordance with the laws on the matter and in consultation with the indigenous communities; and foster respect and knowledge of the different cultures existing in the nation. In 2003 the General Law for the Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples was enacted.

In Norway, education law provides that students with a language other than Norwegian have the right to receive education in their native language and also in Norwegian, though adapted to their needs. Vocation education will also

20 have this bilingual nature. The IBE process is unequal in the country due to municipal differences in income, ability and willingness to enforce laws and regulations. Today there are Sami schools that reach the university level, and their curricula include the teaching of Sami language, art and culture.

All the study countries have ratified, at different times, ILO Convention 169 “On Tribal and Indigenous Peoples in Independent Countries, 1989”.

4. Actual Presence

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The Real Presence of Intercultural Bilingual Education in the Countries

In spite of what constitutions, education laws and other relevant laws have provided, official IBE has been inadequately developed and relatively marginal in all the countries. By establishing IBE the states appear to have done what was politically correct before really committing to this goal and process. With IBE conceived and structured as an educational system for indigenous peoples, it has carried relatively little weight in all the national educational systems. An expression of this quantitatively reduced presence is that the gathering of official information on the subject shows significant inadequacies and shortfalls. Moreover, in some countries access to this information is blocked.

The challenge posed by education for originating peoples, and the interculturalism that must accompany this for the entire Latin American society, is enormous. Indeed, there are a total of **665 indigenous peoples in Latin America (316 in the Amazon) in 23 countries, with a total population of close to 29,464,000 inhabitants**; discussion abounds and agreement is lacking on the definitive figure.¹ The linguistic diversity is also very extensive; for example, there are 64 languages in Colombia, 36 in Bolivia and 24 in Guatemala in addition to Spanish.

IBE has been organized in the national education systems as a special system apart, dedicated to providing the originating or indi-

¹ The Indigenous Fund speaks of 50 million, the World Bank of 40 million, and Mexico's UNAM of 38.5 million.

22 genous populations with their own educational centers, their own teachers and their own people in charge at the national and intermediate levels. In all the countries the predominant school system has been the Hispanicized one, and the IBE has operated as a poor, disadvantaged relative. In all the study cases there is a formal structure such as an under-secretariat or general office in charge of IBE. The last country to create an office of this sort was Paraguay in 2007. Ecuador has raised the status of IBE from a national office to an under-secretariat (although it is unclear whether or not this is true progress). In Bolivia, since “education is intracultural, intercultural and plurilingual throughout the educational system”, the ministry is directly responsible for it. In Peru there is a national office for rural and bilingual intercultural education. In Mexico, the General Office for Indigenous Education was created in 1978.

In Ecuador there are 2,197 IBE educational centers with 119,424 students and a total of 6,441 teachers – of which a significant percentage have no mastery of an indigenous language. In primary

education there were a total of 1,972,621 students in 2008, making IBE students some 6% of all students. This corresponds to the size of the indigenous population, which according to the 2001 population census was 6.8% of the national total (measured by ethnic self-definition).

In Guatemala, Government Decision 1093-84 gave rise to the National Bilingual Education Program (PRONEBI), supported by the U.S. government (this was in the last year of the military government prior to the writing of the current political constitution). PRONEBI was the successor to the Hispanization program initiated in the 60s in the country’s most remote areas.

According to information provided by the Vice Minister of Bilingual Education (in an interview), there are 7,350 schools where there may be bilingual teachers; this number represents some 25% of all schools. The indigenous population is 40%, according to the last general population census of 2002.² Bilingual school codes only

² There is controversy with regard to the numbers. According to Mayan researcher Leopoldo Tzian in the book *Mayas y Ladinos en Cifras* (Cholsamaj, 2009), in 2007 there were 8,140,310 Mayans who represented

exist at the preschool level, while there are no bilingual codes for primary schools. This makes it difficult to obtain stable, reliable statistics. Every year the number varies, depending on who collects, provides or processes the data.

The total number of teachers is 3,729 (60% women) in preschool bilingual schools, 42,844 (60% men) in primary schools, and 330 in ENBIs (teachers colleges). There were 101,500 bilingual students in preschool and 347,476 in primary schools. Only 3 out of every 10 indigenous students receive classes with bilingual teachers, and classes are received in only 9 out of 24 indigenous languages. There is in 15 of the country's departments, and it has greater presence in rural areas than in urban areas. In urban areas there is bilingual education, but with little coverage, even in municipal seats with a predominantly indigenous population. There is practically no in department seats or the capital city.

In the history of educational spending, BIE has not garnered more than 7% of the MINEDUC's budget. Funding generally comes

from World Bank and IDB loans to the government.

In Peru the number of basic education students addressed by IBE is *867,603 out of a total of 6,069,659* – some 14.3% of the total, and mostly at the primary level. Quechua (11.4%) and Aymara (1.3%) have the greatest presence among the languages, with the others at less than 1% of the total.

In Colombia, the preschool student population is 1,809,341, out of which 50,237 are indigenous, representing 2.7% of all students at this level. A total of 149,454 indigenous students are in primary and 377,894 have not finished basic primary schooling. There were 28,649 indigenous students in complete secondary and 108,052 in incomplete secondary. The DANE records that 77,491 indigenous persons have achieved a complete high school education; 17,329 have achieved an incomplete high school education, and 32,344 have fully completed higher education. In addition, 972 indigenous persons are recorded as having graduated from teachers college, and there are 1,454 who have not completed their teachers college studies.

61% of the total of 13,344,770 Guatemalans. It should be remembered that the censuses are self-identifying.

After Brazil, Colombia is the Latin American country with the largest Afro-descendant population. The 2005 census estimated it at close to 5 million, but according to estimates made by the communities and organizations themselves, they constitute somewhat more than 12 million. There is no differentiated education for them. It is important to note that two Afro-descendant communities preserve traces of their linguistic systems – Palenque de San Basilio, which maintains Palenquero, and the Raizals of the archipelago of Saint Andrew and Providence, who speak the Raizal language rooted in an English Creole. In the Santander regions and Itagüí (Antioquia) there is an ethnic Roma or gypsy minority that preserves its Romani language.

In Paraguay there were 380 IBE schools in 2008 with 20,120 students and 1,077 teachers, 915 of which were speakers of Guarani. The total number of preschool and BSE students reached 1,028,339, so the 20,120 IBE students represent 2% of the total. As there are 44,882 preschool and basic school education teachers and 1,077 IBE teachers, they represent 2.4% of all

teachers at these levels. The indigenous population is 108,308, equal to 2% of the total population, and there are five linguistic families – Guarani, Maskoy, Mataco-Mataguayo, Zamuco and Guaycuru – which are distributed into 20 ethnic groups.

In Brazil, at present (2010) there are 14 ethno-educational territories and another 28 in the information and prior consultation phase with the indigenous peoples, undergoing diagnostics and reaching agreements. According to the 2010 school census, there are 2,836 indigenous schools attended by 196,075 students. There are around 12,000 teachers in the indigenous schools, 95% of whom are indigenous themselves. The schools are located in 24 states; only 2 states and the federal district have none. Most are located in rural areas, although there are some in cities such as Manaus, Curitiba, Campo Grande and Porto Alegre.

There are private indigenous schools, but they are funded by state enterprises as indemnification for the building of large infrastructure works such as hydroelectric works. There is no social ISE.

In Mexico the indigenous educa-

tion subsystem handles 1,283,049 students, 49% girls and 51% boys. Since the country's basic education system has 25,603,606 students, IBE students are 5% of the total. IBE has 21,605 schools representing 9.7% of the total. IBE teachers number 57,714, representing 5% of the total.

In Norway there is no accurate measurement of the Sami population; estimates vary from 40,000 to 60,000 inhabitants. The educational system has no statistics by ethnicity.

5. Teacher Training

27

The preparation of Intercultural Bilingual Education Teacher Training

IBE teacher training has been geared to preparing teachers for working in the respective schools. There has been no preparation of teachers for working in the whole educational system and making a reality of interculturalism – which up to now is basically a declaration. On the other hand, IBE training is considered clearly deficient in quality and inadequate in quantity in the face of its revaluation and expansion.

The new outlook for IBE and the idea of interculturalism for all require IBE teacher training to be radically expanded and its quality to be raised.

In Bolivia, teacher training is given in 27 schools and 20 additional units that depend on some of those 27. One of these belongs to the Assembly of Guarani Peoples (APG). With the new education law, teachers colleges will become part of the pedagogical university to be created. Current law expressly prohibits private teacher training; at present there is one teachers college belonging to the Catholic Church, but it can no longer receive new students.

The bottleneck in the current – and previous – reform is teacher formation. In 2010 there were 130,000 teachers, but only 10,000 are trained for working with indigenous languages (Walter Gutiérrez). The ones that are lacking should be trained for the new demands. Since 2009, training has expanded from 3 to

28 5 years, and in 2009 there were 22,000 education students. Given that PIIE (plurilingual, intercultural and intracultural education) has been created for the entire educational system and all its levels, this poses a radical challenge for rapidly expanding teacher training in quantity and quality.

Student selection takes place through an exam and a vocational interview; there is no selection system for differentiating IBE from the rest. At present a lower score is required for those coming from originating peoples; the fact that they have received an inadequate education is well known, given the deteriorated living conditions of their families and communities. Even in 2010 some 20% had entered through union promotion.

The 1994 reform incorporated IBE as a cross-cutting axis in the curriculum, but only a little headway was made in bilingualism and almost nothing in interculturalism. The programs have rescued neither indigenous cosmology nor epistemology; neither have they built interculturalism with mestizos. IBE has been implemented in the countryside, in

part of primary education, and only as bilingualism.

In Ecuador there are 6 pedagogical institutions for IBE teacher training – six public and one private; three of the public institutions are in the Amazon and two are in the mountains. Many of the IBE teachers have no mastery of the oral and written languages, and neither do the teacher trainers.

Entry selection for the training institutions is quite deficient; the candidates supposedly have to be bilingual and have a vocation, but in practice the selectors cannot be very strict or they would end up without any candidates. As a means to improving teacher training, the educational reform included the creation of the UNAE (National University of Education of Ecuador). An IBE educational model exists – the MOSEIB, designed by the DINEIB and even recognized and praised by UNESCO – but the teachers balk at implementing it. They don't know the language, so they don't implement the curriculum. Teachers still feel that teaching IBE ranks below the Spanish system, and this is nothing if not a reflection of the historical discrimination the indigenous peoples

have suffered. The low salaries and poor working conditions are also factors.¹

In Guatemala, teacher training takes place in 21 intercultural bilingual teachers colleges for training teachers in nine indigenous languages: K'iche', Mam, Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, Tz'utujil, Q'anjob'al, Achi, Popti', Ixil and Ch'orti. Present-day teachers colleges offer two degree programs. One is in the teaching of intercultural primary school education, designed for Spanish-speaking student teachers to teach Spanish-speaking students. Students in the program must learn an indigenous language as their second language, however, thus preparing themselves to implement the basic national curriculum (CNB), which includes interculturalism and a second national language for the entire national education system. The second degree is in the teaching of intercultural bilingual primary school education, specializing in teaching the indigenous population. Both degree programs are intercultural.

¹ An example of this is that the Instituto Pedagógico de Limoncocha in the Amazon graduated 23 teachers; 22 of these were quickly hired by the oil companies, where they earn three or four times what they would earn as teachers.

In-service training has been launched with the Academic Program for Professional Teacher Development (PADEP) in partnership with the National Teachers Corps, the Universidad de San Carlos and international cooperation (2 years of study). In June 2011 the Higher Council of the Universidad de San Carlos in Guatemala authorized a university degree in intercultural bilingual education through the Secondary Education Teacher Training School (EFPEM). For candidates to be selected for training as BIE teachers, in addition to meeting general requirements they must be bilingual with a mastery of Spanish and the language of the region where they will be teaching. Both public and private teacher training exists.

In Paraguay the matter of teacher training has a feature that does not exist in other countries in Latin America, as teachers have to be trained to work with two populations, a huge majority (87%) speaking Spanish and Guarani.² That majority, particularly youths and adolescents, need to strengthen their oral and written skills in the

² Only 13% do not speak Guarani, of which 7% are Paraguayan and the other 6% are foreigners.

30 two languages; the biggest problem is with Guarani, since historically it has been spoken but not written. Teachers have not received adequate training in the language or the pedagogy for working with it; in addition, teaching materials are insufficient and there is no unified grammar.³

Teacher training centers will have to prepare bilingual educators in Guarani and Spanish. The law provides that within the territory of an indigenous language, teachers must also be trained in that language.⁴

Another teacher training opportunity would have to target those who are working or would be working in the IBE system, which currently handles little more than 20,000 students, most of them Guarani speakers. Here the current need would be for

³ In Paraguay, Guarani is awaiting standardization; this is one goal of the recently-passed Language Act. Teachers at all levels need bilingual education appropriate for their task. There has been no official BIE training; it has been provided by private institutions such as the Ateneo de la Lengua y Cultura Guarani, the Instituto de Lingüística del Paraguay, the Instituto Superior de Lenguas of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Universidad de Asunción (the only Guarani language degree program in the country, founded in 1971), and more recently the Universidad de Itaipú. The Ateneo (1985) would have trained some 22,000 teachers in the teaching of Guarani, out of a total of 70,000 in the country, and as of 5 years ago can confer a baccalaureate degree.

⁴ In addition to Spanish and Guarani.

intra and interculturalism, in addition to bilingualism. There are 17 indigenous nations or peoples – six of which speak Guarani – with a little over 100,000 inhabitants. There are 11 peoples who are not receiving education in their language. The 1967 constitution recognized Guarani as a national language; the 1992 constitution made it into an official language. The 1994 education law established bilingual education, but failed to provide books or trained teachers for enforcing the law.

In Peru, IBE teacher training takes place in very few institutions, the explanation being that IBE is only for indigenous people. Training is provided by 20 higher pedagogical institutes (ISPs); 13 are in the Andean area, 2 are on the coast and 5 are in the Amazon. Of these 20, only 5 had an approved entrant goal in 2010; the rest had not been able to confirm students who could meet entry requirements. The Universidad Nacional de Educación Enrique Guzmán y Valle (La Cantuta), the Universidad Nacional Indígena de la Amazonía (UNIA) and the Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, in Puno, also give IBE teacher training.

Educational provisions require IBE teachers to master Spanish and

the originating language of the area where they work, both in the oral as well as written forms.⁵ The Bylaws to the Teacher Appointment Act reinforces this, specifying that IBE professionals must have a degree in intercultural bilingual education or accredited training in IBE. In 2009 the minimum score for entering an ISP was set at 14 (out of 20). Indigenous students come from rural areas and are mostly poor and not academically well-prepared, and it is very difficult for them to pass the entrance exam. As a result, the ISPs dedicated to IBE training are being left without students. The People's Ombudsman has asked that the minimum score of 14 be eliminated for the entry of students from originating peoples.

In Brazil there is initial and in-service training as well as training for teachers in charge of ISE schools; this is coordinated by the state secretariats of education with the MEC's technical and financial support. Initial training for higher levels is provided by state and federal universities by agreement with indigenous organizations and with the support of the PROLIND/

⁵ A UNICEF study of working teacher characteristics showed only 31.4% had met the language and culture requirement that would allow them to give context and relevance to their work.

MEC/SECAD. The training is given in public institutions.

In general, teachers who will be working in indigenous schools are chosen by the communities, represented by the local political authorities, and tend to be from the same community, although this is not obligatory.

In Mexico, the General Office for Indigenous Education (DGEI) is in charge of generating public IBE teacher training policies, and has an office for the professional development and training of these teachers. At one stage an orientation course was given to prepare in-service teachers, since in many cases the community teacher was the one who had the most studies or who had studied high school (completed secondary school education). Later teachers began to be required to have completed their bachelor's degrees and to have entered service by taking a public examination. Today most indigenous teachers have gone through a teachers college or have received their degree in primary and preschool education for the indigenous milieu from the National Pedagogical University (UPN), which was created to reverse the lack of training

32 and degrees and was geared to in-service teachers. IBE training institutions are public, free-of-charge and dependent on the federal government, including the UPN, which comes under the SEP. For selecting those to be trained as IBE teachers, a minimum profile exists that includes knowledge of the language that will be taught.⁶

In Norway, recruitment is low for Sami teachers and their job is made difficult by the lack of sufficient materials, adding an extra task to their load. Thus IBE continues to drag behind the Norwegian educational system, despite headway made thanks to the Sami struggle and the work of the union itself.

⁶ As established in the document *Lengua indígena. Parámetros Culturales*, prepared by the DGEL. But the most important thing is for the teacher to speak the indigenous language.

6. Worker's Organizations

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Intercultural Bilingual Education and Education Worker's Organizations

In general, education workers' organizations have arrived late to the indigenous issue, the demands for incorporating IBE into the national educational system and their discussion, and have not been able until now to come up with sufficiently developed proposals. What is involved is an historical debt on the part of education workers and their organizations to indigenous peoples. In the past, the struggle to incorporate IBE into educational tasks has been led by indigenous organizations, indigenous intellectuals, mestizo intellectuals with links to indigenous society, and specialized NGOs with a commitment to the issue. The organizations'

classist orientations, their view of indigenous people as peasants and their tendency to put cultural and identity aspects in second or third place in the struggle – or to not consider them at all – led them to invisibilize the issue and not give adequate significance to racism and other types of discrimination that accompanied economic exploitation.

In the case of Bolivia two organizations exist, one being the National Confederation of Rural Education Teachers of Bolivia (CONMERB) and the other being the Confederation of Urban Education Workers of Bolivia (CTEUB). The first has been committed to the

34 struggle for IBE since the 1970s, demanding, proposing and taking on specific educational projects. This early incorporation of the CONMERB could be partially explained by its rural nature and its direct experience with the problems of the indigenous peasant community. Moreover, some of its members have been and are from this community. A third factor that could explain this heightened sensitivity is its commitment to the educational code of 1955, which was Hispanicizing but ended up expanding education into the rural and indigenous community. The CTEUB's experience has been urban and more linked to a classist worker struggle. It did not get involved early on in the educational demands of the indigenous movement, so it still (in 2010) had not developed a proposal on the issue.

In Ecuador's situation the UNE (National Educators Union), as with the other organizations in Latin America, had come up with little in the way of IBE proposals and demands. Three years ago a secretariat was created in the national executive committee to handle the issue; it was supposed to be replicated in mid-level structures. The

national head of the secretariat noted that approximately 40% of the country's IBE teachers are members of the organization.

The UNE has taken a pro-IBE stand, especially partnering with and supporting CONAIE in defending control of IBE by organized indigenous nations, since the new law has excluded them from the decision-making and control they have had over their education since 1988. The UNE has expressed a fear that interculturalism (which still does not really exist) is diluted in the intercultural circles created by the law due to a Spanish or Hispanic predominance there which would be in the minority where there are IBE teachers and schools. The UNE feels that IBE should be kept as a system under indigenous control to strengthen the autonomy and identity of indigenous peoples.

In Guatemala, the National Assembly of the Teachers Corps and the STEG have been moving forward fairly recently with respect to IBE, but they have done so quite significantly. The STEG has organized a division for IBE within their structure and has been pushing the process – especially with the admi-

nistration of President Álvaro Colom. At present the teachers corps organizations are supervising and regulating the professionalization program, and one of the main elements of this is IBE, including the formulation of a new curriculum.

In the Peruvian situation the SUTEP added IBE to its debates in 2001 and in 2002 created a secretariat in charge of interculturalism, naming to it teachers deriving from originating peoples. Its proposals have been general in nature, and now it needs to come up with more specific ones. More developed work on IBE has been done in some provincial SUTEP offices in the Andean and Amazon areas.

In Norway there are very few minority members in the organization and its leadership structures, but they are making an effort to change that. The Sami have a permanent position on the Committee of Representatives. Although Sami teachers are union members, it is not known how many there are since it is prohibited to ask for information on ethnicity (and other characteristics) when joining to prevent any discrimination; paradoxically, this politically correct provision invisibilizes Sami tea-

chers and could block progress on IBE in the union.

Neither the **OTEP** of Paraguay nor the **SNTE** of Mexico or the **FECODE** of Colombia have developed any known proposals on the subject of IBE.

7. Education Workers Proposals

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Existing Intercultural Bilingual Education Models and Aspects that would be Included in a Proposal by Education Worker Union Organizations

Research has made it possible to see that, in general, the situation of IBE appears to be following two paths resulting (in particular) from two key aspects: the organizational development and struggle waged by the indigenous peoples, on the one hand, and the relative and absolute numerical size of the indigenous population on the other. Of course, government views of the matter have also had an influence.

The first path implies that IBE could be a process involving the country's entire population, not just that of the indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and others. **In Bolivia**, current education law provides that all education, at all levels, must be intercultural, intracultural, bilingual and in some cases plurilingual.¹ **In Ecuador**, the new law carries the name *Intercultural Education Act*, but unlike Bolivia an IBE under-secretariat² has been created that will work on a

1 It proposes to incorporate ancestral knowledge and skills alongside those coming from the Western culture in the basic national curriculum; it also posits that the non-indigenous population will have the goal of learning an ancestral language. That is, there is no IBE for indigenous peoples. All education is intracultural, intercultural and bilingual, and in some cases plurilingual.

2 In addition, there is an *under-secretariat for intercultural dialog* in charge of transversally interculturalizing the system.

38 specific educational process for the case of indigenous peoples. There is also, however, an under-secretariat whose task would be to transversalize interculturalism in the national curriculum.

As we have already pointed out earlier, in both cases education is taken as a tool for progressing towards the building of a new society centered on “good living”; the visible aspects of this proposal point towards laying the foundation for building a new form of civilizing.

The other existing IBE model is represented by the cases of Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Colombia and Brazil, where this type of education functions as a system apart for the indigenous peoples, although minor elements of interculturalism are found in the non-indigenous curriculum linked to the study of the history and culture of originating peoples. At any rate, in these cases only the indigenous are intercultural. **Paraguay** is a special case as it has a small indigenous population (2% of the total), and a specific IBE model would be adequate. Moreover, though, bilingualism is a reality among most of its population, and this requires a Guarani-

Spanish bilingual model and a true understanding that what is “Paraguayan” is a synthesis of what is indigenous and Creole. Bilingualism is gaining force and the cultural aspect is beginning to be demanded.

Thinking of the entire Latin American region and Norway, it is obvious that union organizations could not opt for a single IBE model, since the ethno-cultural and demographic situations with respect to size and distribution of indigenous populations in the territories, political power relationships, etc., make a single path or a single proposal impossible. This does not keep us from pointing out common principles from which a start could be made.

Based on available experience, when preparing proposals the organizations should keep in mind considerations such as the following:

For unions and teachers the indigenous cause implies a demand to pay off an historical debt for having been a more or less unconscious party to the process of Hispanization, assimilation, homogenization, discrimination, and definitely ethnocide.

Taking on the indigenous struggles and educational demands is

right and politically correct. Indigenusness represents a strong political potential and unquestionable ethical strength. An alliance with the indigenous, Afro and other peoples for an educational reform aimed at building a multilingual, multicultural and intercultural nation to the benefit of the majorities has a good chance of being successful.

An IBE educational model might have the following characteristics and general features:

Interculturalism should be a nation project; in some cases it involves nations where various nations exist. It should be for the entire population and not just for the indigenous and/or Afro-Latino populations and it should involve the entire educational system at all levels, including university. This would imply including in the national curriculum indigenous and Afro knowledge, skills, epistemologies and cosmovisions alongside and in interaction with Western knowledge.

It would require making available to each originating people and the Westernized white-mestizo population appropriate and relevant pedagogies in line with their cultu-

ral characteristics and specific ways of knowing. An important point to highlight is that there cannot be a single IBE curriculum, since this would mean a failure to address diversity and an understanding of the indigenous world as being homogenous. It should be pointed out that the methods of learning within communities of originating peoples are active and run consistently through the practices of everyday life; the Western mode of learning, which is abstract, contemplative and memoristic, is especially alien to them and ineffective for their development.

It would include the defense, recovery and development of indigenous languages. This might mean the creation or strengthening of language academies. This also has vital content for today, as there are ancestral languages in danger of extinction; but also indigenous populations that have lost their languages want to recover them as a core aspect of their culture and identity.

It would require participative research to recover cultural aspects of indigenous institutionality (legal forms, authorities, educational experiences, knowledge and health practices, etc.) and the history of

40 the indigenous peoples and communities, and based on this to write and rewrite their own history and the “national” history.

Intracultural processes need to be fostered and strengthened for both the different indigenous peoples and the Afro-Latinos and mestizos; plurinationalism has no real existence without the existence and strengthening of identities.

Processes need to be developed for deconstructing invisibilization, racism and discrimination. They would have to address issues such as budget allocation, school infrastructure, educational management and structure, the curriculum, textbooks and school materials and teacher training, etc.

The organized originating peoples must have opportunities to participate in making decisions on education in their countries. When IBE is a system for the indigenous peoples alone (not a very desirable situation), they must have the control even if other government and social authorities participate. In the system’s general interculturalism, participation of the indigenous communities must be substantial in order to both guarantee it and *get beyond* the view of indigenes-

ness as the “glorious past”, folklore for tourists and the “light” multiculturalism of the World Bank.

Racism from the colonial era against first the Africans and then their descendants has not ended. The inclusion of Afro-Latino aspects in the educational system is just as relevant as the inclusion of indigenous aspects; it must be taken on as part of building multinationalism, and it implies issues similar to the ones noted for indigenesness.

A very pertinent aspect for complying with the above is teacher training. This has to change substantially; all the teachers in the educational system will have to be trained in interculturalism, including the learning of an ancestral language. Teachers working in indigenous and Afro-Latino spaces should preferably come from those origins in order to be in harmony with the cultural spaces in which they carry out their task.

Union organizations have to take a much more active role in teacher training in order to guarantee clear objectives and an integrated national system that welcomes diversity while overcoming the current commercial and bureaucratic fragmentation.

The proposals should keep very much in mind the fact that indigenous and Afro-descendant populations have subjectively, socially and materially deteriorated educational conditions, since most are poor or extremely poor and have been excluded and discriminated against. A good curriculum and good teachers will not suffice; much more is required.

Up to now IBE has had, with few exceptions, a markedly rural nature. This situation cannot continue in the urban spaces. There are thousands and in some cases hundreds of thousands of indigenous people (in Mexico City) who have had to migrate to the cities and who are not receiving a relevant education. Whether IBE is conceived as a system for the entire population or maintained solely for indigenous peoples, the new urban indigenous reality has to be addressed, as ethnocide continues in strength in the urban setting.

The indigenous society, and especially the rural one, needs a flexible school calendar and educational administration; tasks in the field have specific, unchangeable seasons since they are tied to the cycles of nature. Whether the indi-

genous people work on their own lands or move around as temporary workers – or both – the urban calendar does not work for them.

IBE teachers tend to work under difficult situational and environmental conditions, geographically, economically, socially and in terms of infrastructure. In addition to requiring good training and giving them social and institutional recognition, they would need to be especially compensated in terms of money in order get them to go to all the places, especially the most remote, and stay there. In all the study countries, being a rural teacher, and an IBE teacher to boot, is still considered not very prestigious and a bit inferior.

The above guidelines and aspects should be seen as essential for preparing the specific country proposals, but obviously they might not be the only ones.

8. Some Tentative Conclusions

The struggle of organized indigenous peoples and other stakeholders has caused most of the countries in Latin America to incorporate the presence of indigenous peoples into their constitutions, taking them out of their historical invisibility. To various degrees the pluricultural and plurinational nature of the societies has been recognized, although in some countries there is only talk of peoples and communities. All the countries in this study have signed ILO Convention 169.

There are at least three IBE models and/or situations in existence: Bolivia and Ecuador as intercultural models for the entire population; Peru, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala and Norway with IBE for indigenous peoples only (in Peru there is talk of general interculturalism, but this has

not happened); and the third, Paraguay, with IBE for its indigenous population and the need for a bilingual and intercultural model for the population as a whole.

In the last two decades of the twentieth century and up to the present there has been some significant progress in the content of indigenous demands. The demands have changed from calling for IBE or the right to their own education and erasing the assimilationist content of mestizo bilingual education. The demand has gone from:

IBE at the primary education level to IBE at all educational levels.

IBE for indigenous populations to IBE for the entire society, including incorporating the study of indigenous languages for non-indigenous people.

Interculturalism for the indigenous population only to interculturalism for the entire population.

44 This interculturalism presumes the study of ancestral languages, cosmovisions, skills and knowledge by everyone. For knowledge to be truly universal, ancestral knowledge must be placed alongside and in interaction with Western knowledge.

A complaint only about what is taught to one of how it is taught – and this includes incorporating indigenous epistemologies in the worldview and cognitive and pedagogic undertaking.

Interculturalism alone to the addition of intraculturalism as a process for building identity for each of the diverse groups and as a true foundation for a plurinational state.

IBE alone to the building of a plurinational, intercultural and multilingual state. This is a demand for the re-founding of the national states that had been built on being Creole and mestizo, practicing internal colonialism. In this sense Bolivia represents the tip of the arrow of the emancipation.

IBE as an educational process for the indigenous population to education as a strategic tool for building a civilizing paradigm known as “good living”.

Up to now IBE has been the poor, disadvantaged relative of the national education systems. Inserting interculturalism as a task and necessity for the entire population would draw it away from its marginal status and enable it to obtain resources, recognition and social appreciation.

A major shortfall of IBE is the teacher training process (although this also occurs in the rest of the educational system). Teacher training has been repeatedly described in the bibliography and interviews as being insufficient and of poor quality. The expansion, reformulation and reappraisal of IBE requires improving the quality and increasing the number of people to be trained for taking care of the entire educational system. A fundamental problem that must be faced for achieving this is the inescapable need to *improve the quality of teacher trainers*.

With very few exceptions, union organizations have arrived late to the issue of IBE, as they have to the processes of educational reform. The organizations’ classist orientations, their view of indigenous people as peasants and their tendency to put cultural and identity aspects

in second or third place in the struggle have led them to invisibilize the issue and not give adequate significance to racism and other types of discrimination that have accompanied economic exploitation. Education has been a major tool for assimilation and invisibilization and has played a part in the cultural ethnocide that has been occurring. Educators and their organizations must become aware of what has happened and contribute decidedly to paying off the historical debt to originating peoples.

Constitutional recognition of the state's multi or bilingual and pluricultural nature is important and represents a breakthrough with respect to the assimilationist, invisibilizing and homogenizing past, but this does not mean that the consequences of this recognition are being assumed in everyday practice. In most cases bilingualism and/or multilingualism are issues for the indigenous population only, and the same thing happens with interculturalism, which is conspicuously lacking in white and mestizo society.

The concrete analysis shows that IBE has progressed more on paper than in reality. Adequately prepa-

red teachers are lacking, research and development of educational materials is lacking, and development of pedagogical aspects is lacking. There is persistent racism making it difficult to accept interculturalism. There are still sectors of indigenous populations that resist sending their children to IBE, having interiorized the racism they have been subjected to. They feel that IBE reproduces the conditions that maintain them in exclusion.

Not all nations in the region have a numerically significant indigenous population, and some appear to have none, but even there the issue of interculturalism is crucial for combating racism and other forms of discrimination, which are presented as an historical legacy and are renewed and strengthened by migration. Education and the organizations have a crucial role to play in this task in order to reach plurality.

IBE is a struggle for education, but it is also a political struggle. There's a reason why the two countries with the most advanced definitions and proposals are Bolivia and Ecuador, where the indigenous movements are powerful and have been able to participate in govern-

46 ments and hold positions of power. Without a doubt, power relationships are essential for the positioning and implementation of IBE and good living. For this reason the immediate and intermediate future of these views and proposals in Latin America depends to a large extent on the continuity and/or rise of governments predisposed to them.

Glossary of Terms Acronyms

Whitening – refers to the policies for assimilation and Westernization of originating peoples and cultures. It is making them “white”, culturally.

Ethnocide – refers to the cultural extermination of a people and/or nation; extermination may or may not be premeditated. It would be the equivalent of cultural genocide.

Ethno-development – linked to the idea that development has to occur from each of the cultures, exercising their autonomy and capacity for self-management. It should occur with identity, and recipes are rejected for their foreignness and ineffectiveness.

Decolonization – conquering of the internal colonialism that interiorized racism, discrimination, and inferiority in the originating and Afro-Latino peoples.

Intraculturalism – refers to the process for fostering the recovery, strengthening, development and internal cohesion of the cultures of originating indigenous peasant, Afro-Latino, Ladino and/or mestizo peoples and nations.

Interculturalism – refers to the interrelating and interacting of the knowledge, skills, science and technology of each culture with the other cultures with which they coexist. It starts with the confirmation of the coexistence of various cultures in a territory and a state.

Plurilingual – implies the existence of different languages or tongues that may be present in a national territory or even in a school and/or classroom; thus historical bilingualism is overcome. It would be similar to the idea that a country is multilingual. In Latin America, however, “plurilingual” is more commonly used.

Plurinational – recognition of the existence of different nations and cultures that are present in the same territory and part of the same state.

APG: Assembly of Guarani Peoples (Bolivia)

CNTE: National Confederation of Education Workers (Brazil)

CONAIE: Confederation of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador

CONMERB: National Confederation of Rural Education Teachers of Bolivia

CTEUB: Confederation of Urban Education Workers of Bolivia

DINEIB: National Office for Intercultural Bilingual Education (Ecuador)

DGEI: General Office for Indigenous Education (Mexico)

IBE: Intercultural Bilingual Education

BIE: Bilingual Intercultural Education

BSE: Basic School Education (Paraguay)

ISE: Indigenous School Education (Brazil)

FECODE: Colombian Federation of Educators

ISP: Higher Pedagogical Institute (Peru)

OPEP: Organization of Education Workers of Paraguay

MOSEIB: Intercultural Bilingual Education Model (Ecuador)

SEIB: Intercultural Bilingual Education System (Ecuador)

SEP: Secretariat of Public Education (Mexico)

SNTE: National Syndicate of Education Workers (Mexico)

STEG: Syndicate of Education Workers (Guatemala)

SUTEP: Sole Syndicate of Education Workers of Peru

UNE: National Educators Union (Ecuador)

UPN: National Pedagogical University (Mexico)

Education International is an education unions global federation gathering nearly 35 million members around the world. Latin America has a regional headquarter in Costa Rica that develops support activities and joint projects with the member union organizations in more than 18 countries. The work developed by Education International for Latin America focuses on strengthening the unions for the defense of quality public education in the region.

A Processes need to be developed for deconstructing invisibilization, racism and discrimination.

Union organizations have an important role to play in that process, that was initiated in two ways. One was Latin America meetings. The first was held last November 2009, convening five countries where indigenous populations are concentrated: Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. The subject was to strike a balance of the prevailing situation of the originating populations. Secondly, a fact finding research process was needed, leading to a proposal for the trade unions to press with, requiring the governments to approach public policies for education of the originating populations.

This document is part of this process initiated by Education Internacional for Latin America in cooperation with Union of Education Norway.



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